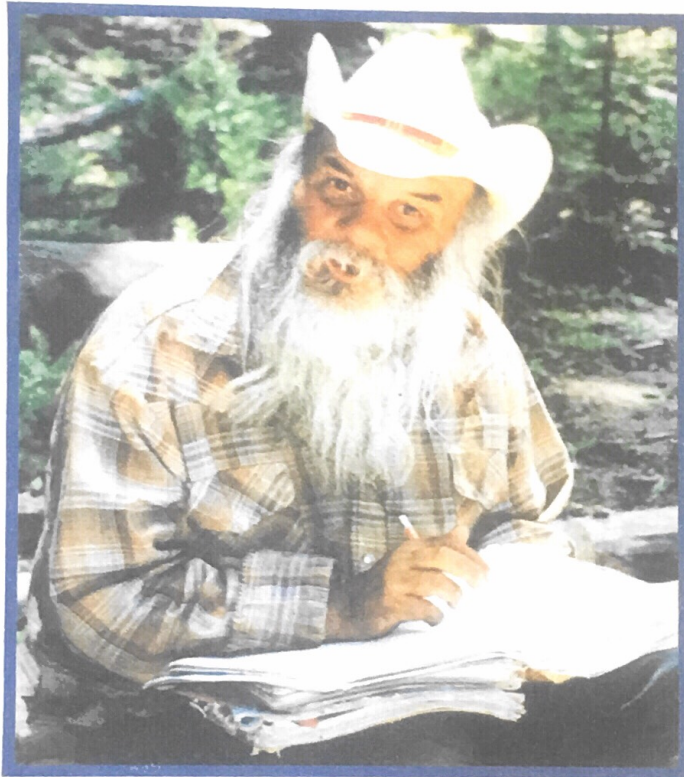




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.*

*Scanned in 2018.  
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13.C ROSE - "I Have Lived Into a  
Different World"

12 pages

[13.C]



Rose

[Rose is a link from the Old Left before World War II to the counter-culture. She inherited some wealth, which she has donated over the years to such causes as Vietnam Veterans Against the War. In recent years she has donated to help the Rainbow Gatherings. And her money set up the Rainbow House in Austin.]

Rose - I Have Lived into a Different World.

I was born in 1923 in White Plains, New York, to a woman whose leg was in a cast. She had just been in an automobile accident. My father was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He and his father had a whiskey distillery in Kentucky. Prohibition closed it down.

My father's family were Jews - very righteous people. My great-grandfather founded the synagogue in Columbia, South Carolina. I did not grow up in an Orthodox Jewish Family. My father was very against Zionism. He didn't think there should be a Jewish state. He belonged to the American Council for Judaism and was big in our local Conference of Christians and Jews. I grew up in one of the most anti-Semitic periods in American history. There was the Klan, Father Coughlin, Henry Ford sold the Protocols of Zion. My father was afraid to take my mother on a vacation. He was afraid the hotel might not take Jews and my mother would be insulted. When Hitler took over Germany, my father sent money to help Jews get out of there.

I grew up in Scarsdale, a very anti-Semitic suburb. It was pure WASP. They didn't even want Catholics there. I was one of the few Jewish girls there and so I never got to date boys. I went to college to have a good time and dance with boys.

I was rich, so I only knew of the Depression because I bought my clothes at sales. I ate good during the Depression. All I knew was my father went to New York and came back and there was money. Then in 1941, I went to a summer work camp in Tennessee after my freshman year at Smith College. I was radicalized overnight. It was at Highlander School in Monteagle, Tennessee. Myles and Zilphia Horton who ran the place were a major influence on my life. Zilphia made me understand that cooking was one of the beautiful arts. My mother had never cooked at all. She had servants until World War II when our maid went to work in a defense plant. Zilphia was



an artist in everything she did. She wrote the song "We Shall Overcome."

Highlander was a center for organizing labor unions in the South. Even now there are hardly any unions in the South. There was a special kind of love at Highlander. Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie used to visit us all the time. We felled trees and had a hell of a good time and got to know each other. We had college kids from Vassar, Social Democratic kids who had escaped from Germany, Communist kids who were very street-wise politically. We had encounter sessions before the word was even thought of. We shared our past histories. It was like a Rainbow Gathering.

I fell in love with a Communist there. He led a student strike in New York and he had been on a chain gang in Georgia. It was the first time I had ever been in love. In those days when you fell in love it was thrilling just to hold hands. You didn't quite "get it on." I have lived into a different world. Oh well, I've got to get used to it.

When I got back to college, it just seemed unreal to me. The real world was outside. I spent the war in Smith and Batchelle colleges. I tried to go overseas with the government, but a friend of mine in the government told me I couldn't go because of my political affiliation. I graduated in '44, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, all that business. I wrote a thesis on folk literature, which was my excuse for going back to Highlander School. I couldn't get a job. Women couldn't get jobs then except as secretaries. I tried being a writer. I edited Task, a left-wing magazine for architects. We expounded more public housing and urban planning. It was very radical then. Radicals then were much less Utopian than in the Sixties.

I was a virgin till I was 23 in 1946. That was perfectly normal then. Then I read Aldous Huxley's books and decided I was holding on to my virginity like a capitalistic monopoly. I've always said I was seduced by a book. I really went out looking to get laid. Of course it was easy. It was a man who later became an editor of the Reader's Digest.

I went through a lot of men that first year. I also stopped biting my fingernails. Sex is the best cure for fingernail biting. I went under analysis with a woman lay analyst. I thought there must be something wrong with me, not society, that I couldn't fit in.

I got pregnant. You couldn't get an abortion then. I got married



and had my son. If I had been able to have an abortion then I would, but I'm glad I didn't have it because I have a wonderful relationship with my son.

Six months later, I got pregnant again. I'm unusually fertile. I still menstruate and I'm 55. I had another son. My husband had sexually liberated ideas, but he was a fascist—that's the only way to describe his political ideas. I divorced him in '51. I just wasn't making it by myself and he was always at my back door, so the marriage was resumed for a while. I had a daughter born in '54. This child was not viable. She wasn't able to sit up. She lived in a state institution in California until her death at the age of 19. I never saw her from the age of four months.

That was a frightening experience for my sons. In 1955 I just left my husband. I drove to Las Vegas with my sons and then I was admitted to the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I figured if I had to make a living, I ought to have the best preparation. Harvard didn't have a lot of shit education courses you have to take to be a teacher. Harvard was just as contemptuous of every other school in the United States in that respect as they always have been. I went one year to Harvard. It was like going to a table of goodies. I could take what courses I wanted.

When I got out, I taught high school in Rye, New York. My father had just died and my mother had gone to Florida, so I lived in their house—the house I grew up in—in Scarsdale and commuted to Rye. I hated that year. I was desperately lonely. There were just no divorced people around. In my class divorce was extremely rare in 1956. I wasn't invited to parties. I was writing short stories. I didn't sell a damn thing. I sent one story to The New Yorker and they sent me a letter which said, "That one came close."

In 1957, I went with my kids to live in Rome. There they thought a divorced woman was a glamorous person. There was no divorce in Italy then. When I said I was divorced, their eyes would light up with pleasure. For four years I lived in Rome and became rich selling the Encyclopedia Britannica. I edited an art encyclopedia for McGraw-Hill Publishers. Then I nearly died of an illegal abortion and I got disgusted with everything and came back to America.

When I came back to New York, I got a job teaching at a school called Dalton. Rich and successful people in publishing and movies sent their children there. Sammy Davis's child went there. They were hip, rich



people there. Some of the kids had a SNCC chapter [Student Non-Violent Co-Ordinating Committee - a Sixties' youth civil rights group] But I nearly freaked out. I can't take a bunch of kids at once. I prefer them one by one. I don't like a school.

I only taught one year. If I hadn't quit I would have been fired. For the next few years I didn't do anything very important. I wrote a movie scenario that didn't sell. I worked at a Young Men's Hebrew Association nursery school. We didn't try dope until my oldest son was a senior at Cornell in 1969. My brother brought over some marijuana and some filter cigarettes and emptied the tobacco from the cigarettes and filled them with marijuana. My son and I smoked marijuana for the first time, and overnight he became a head. My brother is now so against marijuana that he will not allow it to be smoked on his premises.

In May, 1971, my former mother-in-law left a lot of money to each of my sons in a trust fund. They were not to get the capital until they were 30. My younger son had just graduated from Syracuse University and was working as a carpenter. All of a sudden I got a phone call from him in Chicago, where he was studying Catholic doctrine. He said he had just given away his car. Then he wrote that he didn't want any of the trust fund money. He gave his first and only check for the interest to Catholic charities. He said he was planning to work and raise a family. He wrote that he was hitchhiking to Elyria, Ohio and that was the last we ever heard from him. He has not yet been declared legally dead, but I am trying to get him declared legally dead. Then his estate will be divided between his father and me and I can use it to buy land.

My younger son was a marvelous guy. He was always exploring new things and ideas. He ain't been seen in seven years. He was hitchhiking near Kent State and that's an area that hated what he stood for. He was clearly eccentric in appearance. I feel that he died by violence, a victim of the Vietnam War. He wasn't political. He was strongly religiously oriented. He had himself baptized in a black church, the only white member.

In those years, I traveled a lot. I went to Greece three times and to India. This is all so sketchy a resumé. There are things that are important to me, like my love affairs. I haven't mentioned them. I attended a good sociology course at the New School for Social Research



It was taught by a man from India whose family back in his village when he was a child had an income of \$50 a year. I came to class stoned and the class was a dialog between me and the professor from India. He invited me to teach a class with him, which astounded me. I had a very negative self-image because I had never been able to build a career. I enjoyed the class except there were students who tried to bribe me for an A.

In 1973, I had my first real injury. I was stoned on top scrubbing my bathroom floor and bumped against a glass table. I cut my Achilles tendon and ended up in a wheel chair - my first serious accident. I sat around and watched Watergate on TV. It was the greatest thing that has happened in this country since the Revolution. We overthrew a tyrant as bad as George III.

I never had been helpless in my life before. I never had been dependent. It made my friendship extremely tight with a woman who was a healer in New York.

In 1974, I had a mastectomy. I went to a hospital for a cancer biopsy. I made the first major mistake of my life. I lost my nerve and signed a paper allowing the doctor to do whatever he pleased and he did a modified radical mastectomy - cut off my tittie and removed the axilla under my armpit that controls a lot of immunity to sickness, so I get a lot of colds all the time. I lost balance and body symmetry. The doctor said "What does it matter, you might as well lose the whole breast. You're 50, you won't have children." I think the cancer was because I was so upset from the loss of my son. My children were my world.

The operation hurt my self-image for a long time until I met Richard of the Rainbow Family in 1976 at San Miguel de Allende Mexico. I was trying to get my body back together and a woman said, "Have you heard of Richard the Healer? He's part Indian."

So I was enchanted by the idea before I ever met him. I called him and arranged to have dinner with him. When I went to have dinner with him, I went with a woman friend who was very suspicious of Richard. She thought he was a fortune hunter or a con man.

But I don't have suspicions of people. Richard gave me massages with incense and he and his friend Jack were chanting. Richard



was physically beautiful. So I went off with him to Mexico City. We were both wondering what the hell was happening. He was 28, I was 53. It wasn't a sexual thing. He was so un-ironic, so full of a naive fervor in all he told me, like someone on a vision trip. Since then I have found out that a lot of people in the Rainbow Family are like that. Everyone I had met before had always talked with a wink. Even the left wing at Highlander School - there was a lot of New York there. But Richard was so full of fundamentalist fervor.

We didn't speak the same language. We talked at cross-purposes in lengthy discussions. I don't remember what about, but I began almost having an anxiety attack. I couldn't eat. So I gave him \$50 and told him to leave. He left and I fell into a deep sleep. I woke up and asked myself, "What do you want to do?" I decided I wanted to be wherever he was, whether it was friendship or whatever. He was the most interesting person I knew at that time. I thought of him as a way to another different place. He talked about the Rainbow Gathering. He made it sound like he was directed by a divine light on a vision quest. He talked in a way I have always been very skeptical about.

I was close to despair at this point. There was nothing else offering itself to me. So I called the desk clerk and asked when the next train was to Laredo. It was at eight. I thought there might be an outside chance Richard would be in Pharr, Texas with his friend Rusty that he told me about. Needless to say, I had never been in that part of Texas or any part of Texas. It was like going to Alaska for me.

When I went to Texas, I had to hitch from Laredo to Pharr. I got picked up by Joe Sanchez, who publishes the newspaper in Roma, Texas, and he got interested in my story. He took me to Pharr to look for Richard. I found Richard at Rusty's house in Pharr. Richard had just been arrested when he came through town. The police were amazed who arrested him because he was a legendary football player in Pharr.

Then Richard and I bought a van for \$525. I always remember what I pay for things. We drove to Austin and



stayed for a couple of days. We got all the expensive camping equipment in Austin. We went to Vivian, Louisiana and I had \$1,000 sent from my bank to me for whatever was coming up. We stayed with Richard's grandfather. I had grown up in a rich family. I had never seen houses like that except from a train window before. Now it was a great opportunity to be in a house with old car seats and an old washing machine on the porch, poor people.

Then we went to Taos, New Mexico, and met a man from Bisbee, Arizona, named Damian who was an artist and a preacher. He was a fascinating person. He was preaching at us and had us read the Masoretic Translation of the Old Testament. He kind of took over our trip.

We went to the Hopi reservation and talked to Thomas Banyacya a Hopi leader. We were treating Damian as if he were royalty because Richard had an exaggerated awe of Damian and I had an exaggerated awe of Richard. But we realized that Damian was taking advantage of us, so we decided to dump this situation and go off on our own.

Richard got arrested in Flagstaff for marijuana. A cop asked him what he had in his pipe and he said, "Marijuana." I got a hold of a radical lawyer and got him out for bundles of dollars. The van broke down in Pines, Arizona. I lost a lot of money on that, as I have on many things since.

We hitched to Phoenix and bought a motorcycle - a real expensive one. I didn't know I wanted to do it until I did it. Suddenly it seemed very glamorous. We decided we wanted to go to Vancouver before we went to the gathering. We went off on the bike. We stopped and camped with a friend of Richard's in a beautiful place near Lander, Wyoming. When we got to the Canadian border in Montana, the Canadian guards hassled us. They wouldn't let us in at all. So we had to go 200 miles west to enter Canada. We were going through such beautiful country. We went through blizzards on a motorcycle. I've bought a motorcycle since then. I've had a crazy year, acting like I had nothing to lose. When we came back into the US the American border guards hassled us. They did a computer read-out on us. I enjoyed all this.



Then we went to the most magnificent. On the most of the  
 there, Richard met Michelle. I felt really strange, but I had tried to  
 always feel that my relationship with Richard was a strange  
 thing out of the great flux - strange but interesting. I've  
 never done any love-making with Richard. But I was being  
 torn apart by ordinary base human feelings - I think jealousy  
 is the word. I've always been a spoiled person who got what I  
 wanted. I had felt so bad since my tit was removed until I met  
 him. Richard came up to me and told me he still loved me. It  
 was like an old movie. I felt ashamed of my jealous feelings  
 because they were so undignified.

I was just blown away by the gathering itself. It undercut  
 everything I was raised to think. People were just standing around  
 being themselves. I had never met people like that. I felt I had  
 come upon an aristocracy of really tough, brave people. I felt I  
 wasn't worthy to be there. I was in constant conflict between  
 my feelings and my thoughts. It was like what Jesus did to people's  
 heads. I took acid for the first time in my life. Acid is an  
 incredible intensifier, but I think I would have been in the  
 same place without it.

I went off with David Beckwith and his whole crowd and Richard  
 went off on the motorcycle with Michelle. I spent the summer  
 with David and the woman he was with, Jenny and her child  
 Kalimba. We camped at Lake Chelan, Washington. Then David  
 and I hitched to Albuquerque and took a plane to Dallas and  
 then hitched to Austin and lived in a backyard of a hippie house  
 with fleas and bugs of all kinds. I must have been particularly  
 lonely. There was a guy there that I had disliked since I met  
 him at the gathering and I accepted his embraces. I was pretty  
 freaked out, so I went with this guy to San Miguel de Allende  
 to find Richard. Richard wasn't there.

Then I went to New York to rent my apartment out to the president of  
 Western Union International. I had been letting people from the left-  
 wing radio station WBAI stay there for free. I left New York  
 for Austin on another motorcycle. By then I was really into  
 motorcycles. Since I've had cancer, I've felt I'm living on a definitely  
 determined length of time. So I take off when I feel like it. My



son is rich, so I can spend money around every place. I found Richard and Michelle were living in destitution with scabies and everything. The Austin Sign Company was letting them stay on the premises. There were rats fighting in the kitchen.

I took Richard and Michelle to two or three motels in Austin while they were getting their act together. I forget why we moved from one motel to the other. I got tired and got a ride to the airport to fly to San Miguel de Allende. Richard phoned me at the airport and asked me to send him money and I told him I wasn't his mama. He called me again in San Miguel de Allende and I was furious with him because I felt I had given him enough. Much later he came town to San Miguel de Allende with Michelle. By that time they has their act together and it was all very friendly when they got town there.

I met Enrique that winter. His land is a Rainbow Farm in Mexico. I drove all over Mexico with him. We went as far as Chlapas. And I also lived for a while with Kilo from the Rainbow Family while his wife Marsha was in Mexico City. He filled my room with flowers like an old-fashioned Latin lover and then went to spend his days in a bar. In between, we'd get it on. It was a memory week, that's for sure. Part of me loves Kilo and part of me never wants to hear from him again.

March 15, 1977, David Beckwith and I drove with Cindy, his new lover, who was pregnant, up to Austin in a famous truck called White Bird. We lived in and out of a house on Lafayette Street. A lot of the people who were later in the Rainbow co-op house were there. I was there a month. Then I felt it was old. I got a bag of grass because when I have tope, I can put up with anything. I left for Mexico again. I was there a total of six months.

I met someone in Mexico who said maybe Rolfing would help me. Enrique's girlfriend Barbara got me an appointment with a Rolfer. Then I flew to Denver. I have this New York gift called chutzpah, which is the way I sold encyclopedias in English to Italians for \$400. So I just called this Buddhist retreat called Yesha and asked if they would take me in for a while. I had a pleasant two-week interlude there. The Rolfing didn't help at all. It was very



painful. I only got seven treatments instead of all ten.

I took a terrific trip on acid at the New Mexico Gathering and slid bare-ass down a waterfall. Stephen Lightmile got me to help make a dam on a creek and totally destroyed the dam. I met a guy named Nick at the gathering. He was in great pain because of his teeth. We went to Albuquerque to see a dentist. When we were there, I got a used Ford pickup for \$750 and brought it back to the gathering. Then I seemed to be part of another couple with Nick. Nick and I were sleeping together. It was not like with Richard. It was a very physical thing and I really got off on it in a big way.

Nick is 26, an alcoholic. He's also a peyote freak. That's more important to him. He was one of 12 children. He was raised in a detention home. After the gathering I went with Nick to Jemez Hot Springs. Dave Beckwith and Cindy were there with Cinnamon, their baby, who was born at the gathering. Richard and Michelle were there and about 20 more people. I got Nick a second-hand guitar for his birthday July 14.

Nick and I went to Mexico and stayed at the Rainbow Farm there with two guys. One guy had been a Mason for five years at one time. We came to San Miguel de Allende and stayed with some friends. Nick and his friends were running around town talking about not a Epit. And a lovely young professor at the Institute of Primitive Pottery had just gone to jail for marijuana. So all of us who lived in San Miguel de Allende who were hippies ran Nick out of town because he was putting a lot of people in danger.

In these two years I've spent at least \$2,000 on bail money for Rainbow people. I never got it back. I have friends in New York who are always trying to woo me from the Rainbow Family. They don't see the glamor in it. They just want me to have a little more comfort or luxury. They can't see me hitch hiking at my age. My sister, who is extremely tight assed, turned up in San Miguel de Allende. She's partly why I split.

I came back to Truth or Consequences, New Mexico to the Jiffy Boot Store who helped with the gathering. I asked them to help me buy land. I became very ill. It was the beginning



of herpes. In this past year I've had like several times, scabies - very hard to get rid of, gonorrhea and herpes, which was hardest to get rid of. One gland in the groin was swollen up as large as a golf ball. And all this came from hanging out with hippies. I went to Albuquerque. The herpes became worse.

I flew to New York to stay with my brother. Then, after I recovered, I tried to go to the Solar Gypsy gathering in Canada, but I got there too late. I went to California and then to the Barter Fair at the Canadian border. It's like a Rainbow Gathering - living outside, freezing your ass off.

I was on a chase for Nick. I wonder what makes me do things like follow him. It was good to have a goal rather than be bored - Rose's folly and I didn't give a shit who knew. I was hitchhiking around, being befriended by loggers, taking a lot of risks. I came to Austin because I didn't know where to go. I knew Nick hung around there. I met up with Richard. He and Peter of the Christ Brotherhood had met this rich young woman who had spent most of her life in insane asylums. She put some money into setting up the Rainbow House. I put up \$350 a month and opened up a \$1,000 account for the Rainbow Co-op House. I also paid a huge food bill for it at the Austin Food Co-op.

I am very happy about the Rainbow House. I feel it has been a very positive thing. Because of the Rainbow House I think there has been an enormous change in Richard for the better. He takes responsibility more.

In January, 1978, Nick came around with a girl named Diane and I got slightly involved with a crony of his named Two Feather. I bought Nick a school bus. Then I went to Key West with Two Feather and met the Solar Gypsies with their bus. We found an abandoned dump on the shore and cleaned off all the trash so we could sleep there. It's incredibly expensive in Key West. It's the southernmost city in the US and everything loose flows there - all kinds of hippies and they can only afford to stay outside. A guy from the Rainbow House in Austin tried to set up a food distribution place in a black church. I put up some money for it.



Nick came with the bus I bought. We went with Two Feather as far as Gainesville, Florida, until I got tired of it. A lot of what didn't that whole period seems inauthentic to me. It seemed like a marvellous idea to go to Jamaica. It was really cold in Gainesville. Nick and Two Feather wanted to go like mad to Jamaica and I didn't have any strong desires then. Nick and Two Feather are divinely reckless. They will drink or ingest anything. They feel God will take care of them. Nick would like to see himself as a helper of others. That seems to be a Rainbow thing. But I see that everybody has their private stashes still to take care of numero uno.

Jamaica was weird. We were being fleeced by the owners of the room. Well, Jamaica is a poor country and it's expensive for Jamaicans, too. We stayed there two weeks. I don't know if it was foolish or wise. Well, when I have a chance, I don't hold back. I've been back most of this spring [1978]. I have a whole lot of cash, because I sold my apartment. I've gone through about half of it. In the beginning it was because of desperation when I first met up with Richard, but later on it was a spirit of adventure.

I enjoy the Oregon Gathering more than Jamaica. This is the most fun I've ever had at a healing gathering and my health is more fucked than it ever was. It's amazing, the energy here at the gathering in spite of the bad weather. I'm proud to be here.

[In 1981, Rose bought some land at Bear Springs, Arizona, near the former Eden Healing Waters. About 50 Rainbow people lived there in tents and vans and burrows in the earth. In March, 1983, she had all the people leave her land. She let some come back that fall but as of March 1990, no one is living there - though a number of Rainbow people are living in trailers in the desert a few miles away.]